

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT

by

Lieutenant Colonel Ralph H. Groover
United States Army National Guard

Colonel(Ret) Harold W. Lord
Project Advisor

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Report Documentation Page			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 03 MAY 2004		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED -	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE United States Special Operations Forces Strategic Employment				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Ralph Groover				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached file.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 29	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: LTC Ralph Groover

TITLE: UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES STRATEGIC
EMPLOYMENT

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 19 March 2004 PAGES: 29 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the employment of special operations forces and determine if proposed changes in force composition and strategic employment supports Department of Defense Transformation and the National Security Strategy. It is hypothesized that United States Special Operations Command will undergo major changes in roles and responsibilities that will impact current operations and future requirements. This study will consider the current special operations force structures to include active and reserve components. This analysis will recommend future force structure and employment that will best support the National Security Strategy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vii
UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT	1
HISTORY OF UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES	2
ORGANIZATION OF UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND	3
UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES	5
United States Army Special Forces Command (A)	6
United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (A)	6
The United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS)	6
The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (160th SOAR)	7
Special Operations Support Command (A)	7
75 th Ranger Regiment	7
UNITED STATES NAVY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES.....	7
Major Operational Command.	8
Major Component Command.....	8
Major Subordinate Commands	8
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES	8
JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (JSOC).	9
UNIFIED COMMANDS AND THEATER SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMANDS (SOC)	9
UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND MISSIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	11
STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES	13
ENDNOTES	19
BIBLIOGRAPHY	21

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1.....	4
FIGURE 2.....	5
FIGURE 3.....	8
FIGURE 4.....	9
FIGURE 5.....	10

UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT

The successful conduct of special operations (SO) relies on individual and small unit proficiency in a multitude of specialized, often nonconventional combat skills applied with adaptability, improvisation, innovation, and self-reliance. The small size, unique capabilities, and self-sufficiency (for short periods of time) of special operations forces (SOF) operational units provide the United States with feasible and appropriate military responses. These responses do not entail the degree of political liability or risk of escalation normally associated with employment of inherently larger or more visible conventional forces. Although they may be conducted as a single-Service operation, they routinely require joint support and coordination. In addition to being conducted across the full range of military operations, SO may be focused on the strategic, operational, or tactical levels of war. SO are characterized by certain attributes that cumulatively distinguish them from conventional operations. SO can be designed and conducted to influence the will of foreign leadership to create conditions favorable to US strategic aims or objectives. Alternatively, SO may be principally offensive, of high physical and political risk, and directed at high-value, critical, and often time-sensitive targets. The principles of war (objective, offensive, mass, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security, surprise, and simplicity) apply to SO in the same way they apply to conventional operations. SO planners must understand the principles of war and how they relate to SO. Planners must also understand the synergistic affect of SO integration into conventional missions.¹

—Joint Pub 3-05

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate United States Special Operations Forces strategic employment in support of the National Security Strategy of the United States of America. I will examine the historic development of special operations forces and assess current National Security policy and Special Operations Forces current employment and movement to transformation in support of the national objectives. Additionally, I will consider views of experts in the field. The resulting research will support future structure and strategic employment of United States Special Operations Forces.

Our nation is at war. Nothing is more important to our country than fighting the current war and preparing for future threats. In the opening statement of The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002, (NSS) President Bush stated:

Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government. Today, that task has changed dramatically. Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger America. Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank. Terrorists are organized to penetrate open societies and to turn the power of modern technologies against us.²

The president has explained that our national defense requirements have gone beyond the standards established by previous threats to the United States. The current and future threats will require unique application of all elements of national power; Diplomatic, Information, Economic, and Military to effectively fulfill the intent and objectives of the National Security Strategy.³

HISTORY OF UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

By the late seventies United States Army Special Forces were cut back to three active duty groups from seven. Air Force commandos were almost completely eliminated. Navy SEALs were cut by fifty percent. Much of the limited resources were devoted to defending the Fulda Gap with conventional forces. Joint training and the resulting doctrine were almost non-existent.⁴

Renewed interest in the capabilities of United States special operations forces was fueled by events in the Middle East. The successful raid by the Israelis on the Entebbe airport in 1976 and the German operation in Mogadishu to recapture a Lufthansa airplane caused the United States to question whether we had similar capabilities. Although these events were the catalyst to rebuild the Department of Defense's ability to respond to events requiring specialized capabilities, it ultimately took legislative action to effect necessary change within the Department of Defense.⁵

Prior to 1986, United States special operations forces were not organized with a permanent structure, nor were they always used in an appropriate manner. In April of 1980 the failed attempt to rescue the American Hostages in Iran, Operation Rice Bowl, demonstrated many of the shortcomings of the United States military's special operations capability. The United States military was not organized, equipped, or trained to carry out complex special operations.⁶

The net result was that when the nation most needed a joint special operations capability for a challenging mission, the capability simply did not exist. In 1979 Iranian students stormed the United States Embassy in Tehran and took over fifty Americans hostage. President Jimmy Carter ordered a rescue operation and an ad hoc multi-service rescue force was formed. One significant shortcoming of the rescue force, which had tragic consequences, was the lack of a complete and combined mission rehearsal with all elements.⁷

The Joint Chiefs of Staff established the Holloway Commission to study the failure of Operation Rice Bowl and make recommendations for improvement in capabilities. The Commission reported the failure at the Desert One staging area in Iran was the result of the lack

of training by dedicated joint forces, inadequate equipment, unclear command relationships, and the ad hoc nature of the joint forces. They further recommended the establishment of a standing Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) that would report directly to the Joint Staff.

The next major operation that contributed to the formation of the current special operations forces structure was conducted on the small island of Grenada, Operation Urgent Fury. All elements of Special Operations Forces were employed. Deficiencies were discovered in intelligence, training, communications, equipment, and proper SOF integration into the overall plan.

Memories of the Iranian hostage crisis and the aborted rescue attempt at Desert One were fresh. Anxious to avoid a similar experience, policymakers mounted URGENT FURY in haste in response to a threat to American medical students on Grenada. The operation succeeded, but flaws in its execution revealed weaknesses in joint operations. Together with the bombing of the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut that same month, the experience of Operation URGENT FURY added impetus to efforts to reform the joint system which were already under way. . . . URGENT FURY reinforced awareness of weaknesses in the joint system and helped prod Congress to undertake the fundamental reforms embodied in the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986.⁸

The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 as amended by Senators Sam Nunn (D-Georgia), William Cohen (R-Maine), and Dan Daniels (D-Virginia), established two new organizations. These organizations are the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC), and the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).⁹

ORGANIZATION OF UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Discussion of Special Operations Forces requires an understanding of how they are organized and equipped to perform missions with or independent of the conventional force. In a Department of Defense news briefing on 7 January, 2003 Defense Secretary Rumsfeld stated:

The global nature of the war, the nature of the enemy and the need for fast, efficient operations in hunting down and rooting out terrorist networks around the world have all contributed to the need for an expanded role for the Special Operations forces. We are transforming that command to meet that need.¹⁰

United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) located at Tampa, Florida, has the responsibility for management of today's special operations forces. USSOCOM, commanded by a four-star flag or general officer, is one of nine unified combatant commands reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense and the President of the United States (Figure 1). USSOCOM differs from the other unified commands by the legislated separate funding by Major Force Program 11 (MFP-11), which requires a separate Program Objective Memorandum (POM) that is submitted directly to the Secretary of Defense.

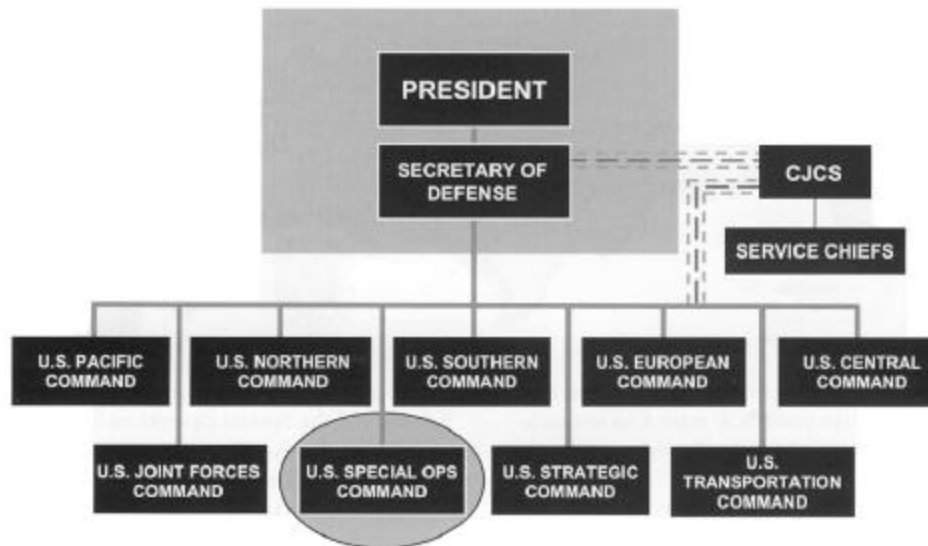


FIGURE 1.

USSOCOM has the lead in the global war on terrorism as well as the responsibility to provide special operations forces to the other eight unified combatant commanders. USSOCOM has three service component commands: U.S. Army Special Operations Command; Naval Special Warfare Command; Air Force Special Operations Command; and one sub-unified command, the Joint Special Operations Command.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) is located at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina and includes; Army Special Forces, Ranger Regiment, Army Special Operations Aviation, Psychological Operations, Civil Affairs, and Logistical and Support Communications units. Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM) is the Navy component of USSOCOM and is located at Coronado, California. Subordinate units include; Seal Teams,

Special Boat Teams, Seal Delivery Vehicle Teams, and Training and Support units. United States Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) is located at Hurlburt Field, Florida. AFSOC includes three special operations wings, two special operations groups, and one special tactics group.

Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, provides a permanent joint headquarters organization tasked with study of special operations requirements, testing and evaluation of equipment, plans, tactics, exercises, and training.

UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) was established December 1, 1989 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina by the Department of the Army (Figure 2). As a component of USSOCOM, USASOC commands all Army active duty and reserve component special operations forces. Oversight of National Guard special operations forces organization, readiness, training, and employment are coordinated through the National Guard Bureau and States Adjutants General.

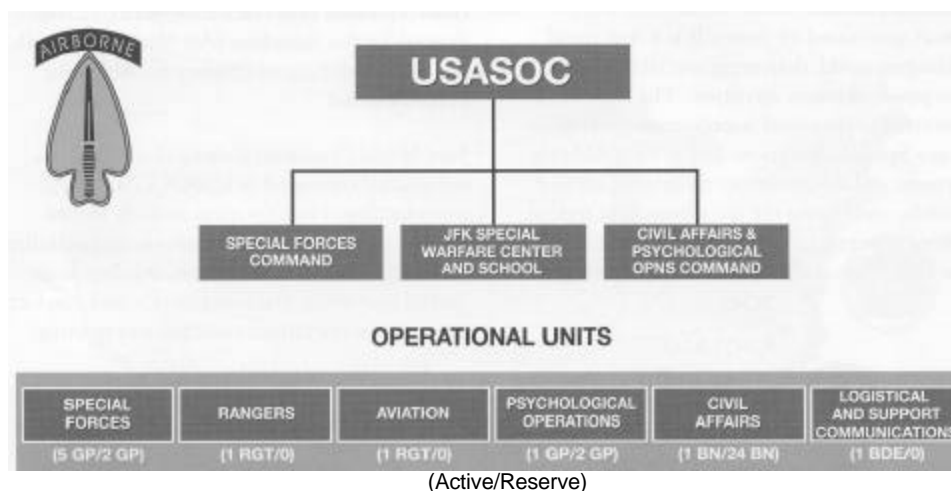


FIGURE 2.

USASOC's major subordinate commands are United States Army Special Forces Command (Airborne), United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), and United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. Major subordinate units are Special Operations Support Command (SOSCOM), 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), and 75th Ranger Regiment.

United States Army Special Forces Command (A)

The mission of USASFC (A) is to provide Combatant Commanders trained and validated Special Forces units. There are currently five active duty and two National Guard Special Forces Groups. Special Forces Groups are composed of three battalions with three operational companies each, a group support company, and a headquarters company. The operational companies have six Operational Detachment Alphas (ODA), or A-teams, assigned to them. The 12 man Operational Detachment "A" (ODA) is the core unit within Army Special Forces. Capable of operating as a split team, two specialists in weapons, communications, medical, intelligence and demolitions are on each team. All team members are foreign language qualified and are culturally sensitive.

Army Special Forces units perform five doctrinal missions during peace and at war: foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, special reconnaissance, direct action, and counter-terrorism.

United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (A)

The mission of USACAPOC (A) is to command all CONUS based Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units. The command consists of about 10,000 soldiers of which some 96 percent are in the U.S. Army Reserve located in 25 states. On active duty is one Psychological Operations Group of six battalions and one Civil Affairs Battalion. Subordinate Reserve Component Civil Affairs Commands include four Brigadier General commands. Civil Affairs (CA) units work to minimize the effect of civilians on the battlefield, and coordinate with civil authorities and civilian populations in the commander's area of operations. Civil Affairs forces support activities of both conventional and Special Operations Forces. Psychological Operations (PSYOP) support United States political, military, economic, and ideological activities to secure national objectives during peace and at war.

The United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS)

The mission of the USAJFKSWCS is to develop policy and doctrine and train both active duty and reserve component Army SF, CA, and PSYOP forces, and act as the specified proponent for Army Rangers and Army Special Operations Aviation. Training includes arctic, jungle, desert, and mountain operations, as well as amphibious instruction.

The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (160th SOAR)

Beginning their lineage from the 101st Airmobile Division in 1980, the 160th SOAR is the Army's premier special operations aviation unit. Specializing in night operations capability, the regiment has a proven record of conducting long-range infiltration/exfiltration, recovery and close air support operations in hostile environments.

Special Operations Support Command (A)

SOSCOM (A) provides command and control of organic elements to provide combat service support, health service support, and special operations signal support to ARSOF units supporting the Geographic Combatant Commanders. The SOSCOM (A) has a Material Management Center (MMC) and provides unique logistics support for ARSOF units. The SOSCOM (A) has 5 geographically oriented forward deployed Special Operations Theater Support Elements embedded in theater armies to provide coordination for logistic, medical and signal requirements for ARSOF units. Additionally, SOSCOM (A) provides forward-deployed Special Operations Signal Detachments in each of the regionally aligned Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC) giving them immediate communications capabilities.

75th Ranger Regiment

The 75th Ranger Regiment is the Army's premier light infantry unit. Composed of three battalions and a Regimental Headquarters, they are trained and ready to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice. The Regiment conducts extensive live-fire exercises and trains continuously in arctic, jungle, desert, and mountain operations.¹¹

UNITED STATES NAVY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM), established in April 1987, is located at Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, California (Figure 3). NAVSPECWARCOM mission is to oversee the organization, training, equipping and readiness of all active duty and reserve Navy Special Operations Forces. Subordinate forces assigned to NAVSPECWARCOM are broke down into three elements.

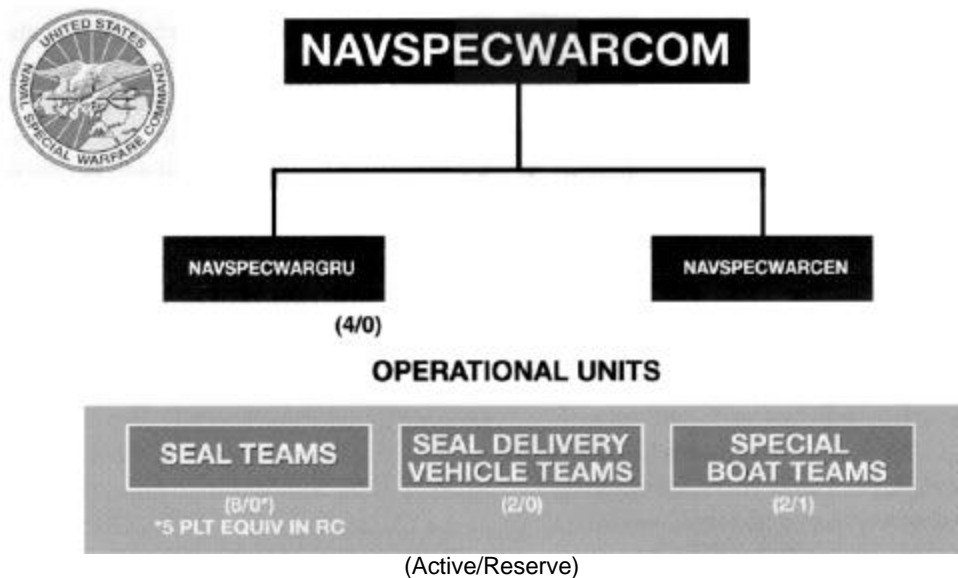


FIGURE 3.

Major Operational Command.

Major Operational Commands include; Naval Special Warfare Groups One and Three located at Coronado, California, Naval Special Warfare Groups Two and Four located at Little Creek, Virginia. These commands provide Navy Special Operations Forces to Geographic Combatant Commanders, Theater Special Operations Commands and numbered fleets located around the world.

Major Component Command

The Major Component Command is the Naval Special Warfare Center (NSWC), which provides training and doctrine development.

Major Subordinate Commands

Major Subordinate Commands are SEAL (Sea Air and Land) Teams, SEAL Delivery Vehicle Teams (SDV), and Special Boat Units.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

United States Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) is located at Hurlburt Field, Florida (Figure 4). AFSOC operates both fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft. AFSOC overseas three special operations wings, two special operations groups, and one special tactics group that come from the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and active duty Air Force.

Additionally AFSOC has the Air Force Special Operations School and Flight Test Squadron. The United States Air Force Special Operations School (USAFSOS) has four departments; Asymmetric Warfare, Regional Studies, Joint Special Operations, and Professional Studies.

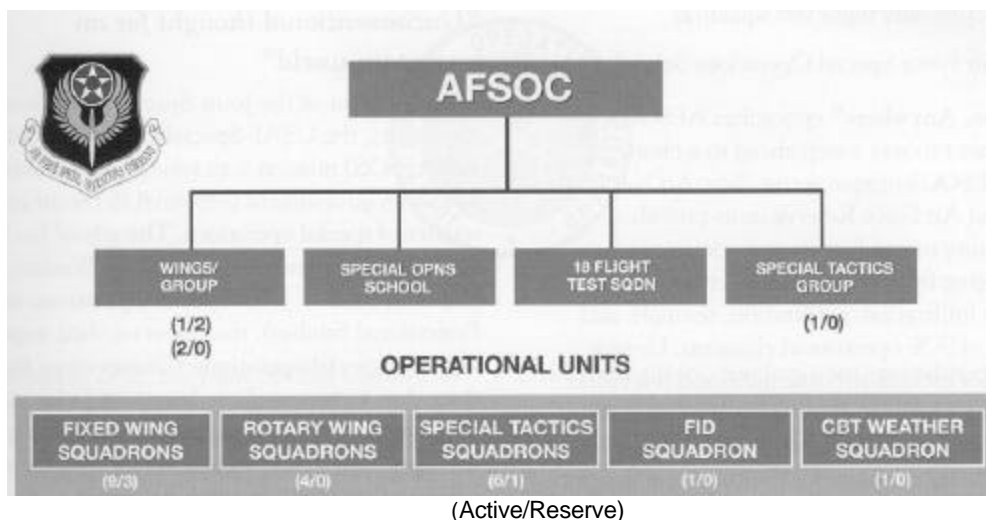


FIGURE 4.

JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (JSOC).

Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) was established in 1980. As USSOCOM's only sub-unified command, it provides a standing joint headquarters tasked with study of special operations requirements, testing and evaluation of equipment, plans, tactics, exercises, and training.

UNIFIED COMMANDS AND THEATER SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMANDS (SOC)

Within each of the six Geographic Combatant Commands are sub-unified Theater Special Operations Commands (Figure 5). The SOC commander, normally a Army or Air Force Brigadier General or Navy Rear Admiral, provides Geographic Combatant Commander with command and control of assigned Special Operations forces and SOF integration into theater war plans. The SOC is able to quickly respond to regional crises and plan and conduct joint special operations. When establishing a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF), the SOC usually forms the core element.¹²

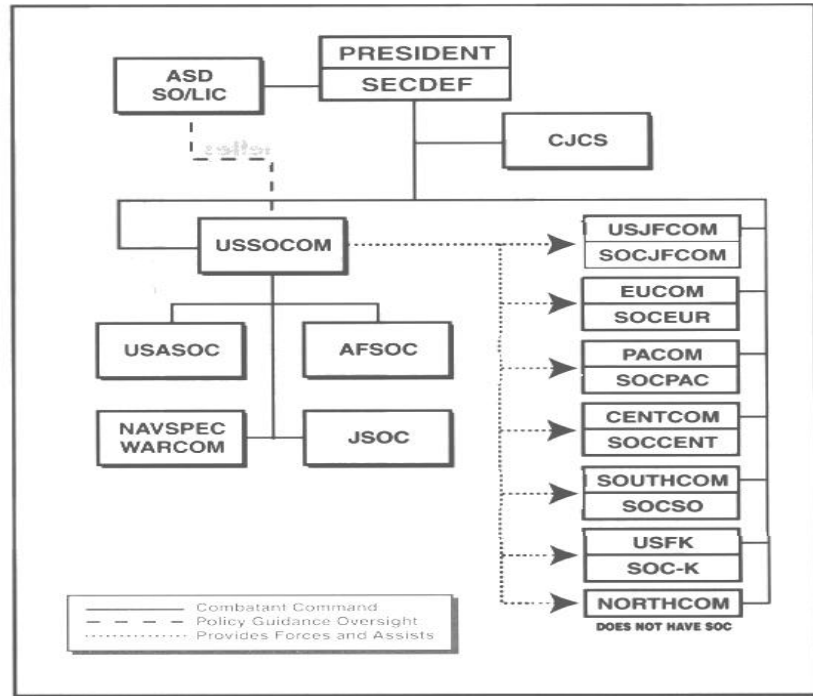


FIGURE 5.

United States Central Command's (USCENTCOM) area of responsibility has a population of over 428 million people; and consists of 17 different ethnic groups, six major languages, hundreds of dialects, varied forms of government, and a wide range of per capita incomes. Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT), located at MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa Florida, implements the command's theater strategy through numerous initiatives and programs.¹³

United States European Command (USEUCOM) is the second largest geographic area of responsibility in the unified combatant command structure. Spanning three continents and encompassing 91 countries, it extends over 13 million square miles and is home to more than one billion people of extremely diverse backgrounds, race, and cultures. Special Operations Command, Europe (SOCEUR) is a deployable headquarters located at Stuttgart, Germany with assigned Special Operations Forces that are supplemented by CONUS based units.¹⁴

United States Pacific Command's (USPACOM) area covers over half of the earth's surface, with over 105 million square miles and nearly 60 percent of the world's population and is the largest geographic area of the unified commands. Special Operations Command Pacific (SOC PAC), located in Hawaii, is the U.S. Pacific Command's SOF sub-unified command.¹⁵

United States Southern Command's (USSOUTHCOM) area of responsibility begins south of Mexico and extends through South America totaling around 10 million square miles, one-sixth of the world's land area. With the exception of Cuba, every SOUTHCOM country has some form of democratic rule. The region is characterized by varied geographic and ethnic composition among the over 300 million population. Special Operations Command South (SOC SOUTH), which is moving from a forward base in Puerto Rico to Miami, Florida, is USSOUTHCOM's subordinate unified command for special operations.¹⁶

U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM), located in Virginia, is one of nine unified commands in the Department of Defense. USJFCOM's primary focus is transformation, experimentation, joint training, interoperability, and force provision. Special Operations Command, United States Joint Forces Command (SOCJFCOM) also located in Virginia, trains conventional and special operations joint force commanders and staffs in employment considerations for Special Operations Forces. SOCJFCOM also assists the geographic SOCs with external training support.¹⁷

UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND MISSIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

USSOCOM responsibilities as established by Title 10 (Sec 167) include:

- Readiness of assigned forces and monitoring the readiness of overseas SOF.
- Monitoring the professional development of all SOF personnel.
- Developing joint SOF tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- Conducting specialized courses of instruction.
- Training assigned forces.
- Executing its own program and budget (its funding comes directly from Congress and not from the Services).
- Conducting research, development, and acquisition of special operations peculiar items.¹⁸

The USSOCOM's mission is to plan, direct, and execute special operations in the conduct of the War on Terrorism in order to disrupt, defeat, and destroy terrorist networks that threaten the United States, its citizens, and interests worldwide. The USSOCOM Vision is to be the most capable special operations force.¹⁹

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States 11 September 2001, Special Operations Forces have focused on several national priorities:

- Destroying al'Qaida and other parts of the international terrorist network
- Speeding transformation of the military
- Counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and associated delivery systems
- Strengthening intelligence collection and dissemination

Operational priorities established for Special Operations Forces are:

1. Preempting Global Terrorist and CBRNE Threats
2. Enhancing Homeland Security
3. Performing Unconventional Warfare and Serving as a Conventional Force Multiplier in Conflict against State Adversaries
4. Conducting Proactive Stability Operations
5. Executing Small-Scale Contingencies

These priorities are closely associated with Special Operations Forces core tasks of:

- Counterterrorism (CT)
- Counter Proliferation (CP)
- Special Reconnaissance (SR)
- Direct Action (DA)
- Unconventional Warfare (UW)
- Information Operations (IO)
- Psychological Operations (PSYOP)
- Foreign Internal Defense (FID)
- Civil Affairs Operations (CAO)

Counterterrorism (CT) has been designated USSOCOM's primary core task. This involves reducing the probability of a successful terrorist attack against U.S. interests. This includes covert, clandestine, and overt, proactive and reactive measures in hostile, denied, or politically

sensitive locations. These missions include kinetic and non-kinetic operations against our adversaries.

Counterproliferation (CP) of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) is to stop and/or reduce development or possession and employment of weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities.

Direct Action (DA) is short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted using specialized equipment, techniques, and personnel. These missions are conducted to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets.

Unconventional Warfare (UW) is a wide range of military and paramilitary operations usually conducted with an indigenous force. Operations can include direct action, covert, and clandestine operations.

Information Operations (IO) is conducted to influence information, information systems, and decision-making.

Psychological Operations (PSYOP) is planned operations to influence behaviors of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.

Foreign Internal Defense (FID) is conducted by military or civilian organizations with foreign governments to promote stability and liaisons. This can include training and equipping host nation military or para-military forces.

Civil Affairs Operations (CAO) includes civil affairs (CA) activities and specialized support provided to commanders responsible for conducting civil military operations (CMO). These activities can involve actions to reduce civilian interference with military operations.

STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

USSOCOM plans, directs and executes special operations in the conduct of the War on Terrorism in order to disrupt, defeat, and destroy terrorist networks that threaten the United States, its citizens and interests worldwide. USSOCOM organizes, trains, and equips Special Operations Forces provided to Geographic Combatant Commanders, American Ambassadors and their Country Teams.²⁰

—USSOF Posture Statement 2003-2004

The organization and capabilities of U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) are particularly suited to contribute greatly to the current war and future strategy. However, Special Operations Forces alone are not suited to answer all of the defense requirements. No one force or single focused strategy will meet all the requirements for countering future threats.

A close examination of the strategy used in the Afghanistan War by Stephen Biddle suggests caution on adopting “one size fits all” approach to future strategy. He writes:

. . . we should be wary of suggestions that precision weapons have so revolutionized warfare that either the American military or American foreign policy can now be radically restructured. Some now argue that the revolutionary potential of precision weapons, teamed with SOF and indigenous allies, can underwrite a neoimperial American foreign policy in which the Afghan model enables cheap but effective military intervention on a potentially global scale.²¹

In a separate evaluation of Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan, John Jogerst concludes among several lessons learned:

. . . the most probable conflict is not the only type of conflict--and may not represent the most significant threat to the nation. Organized, heavy enemy forces remain a threat in some theaters, and heavy, combined-arms air and surface assets may still be the force of choice for fighting them. The challenge of these conflicts lies in adapting the fundamental lessons learned from Afghanistan to local conditions.²²

Protection of the people and territory of United States against attack, followed by promotion of values, and economic prosperity are the core U.S. national interests that are promoted within the Strategy of Special Operations Forces.

In the President’s speech to West Point June 1, 2002 he states:

Our Nation’s cause has always been larger than our Nation’s defense. We fight, as we always fight, for a just peace—a peace that favors liberty. We will defend the peace against the threats from terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. And we will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.

The first chapter of the NSS states the methods to achieve the peace by;

- Champion aspirations for human dignity
- Strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends
- Work with others to defuse regional conflicts
- Prevent our enemies from threatening us our allies, and our friends, with weapons of mass destruction
- Ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade

- Expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy
- Develop agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power
- Transform America's national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASDSOLIC), Thomas O'Connell, in a public address on 5 February 2004, credits the changes in the geography of the world with the emergence of a crossroads of weapons and extremism. The United States Government and the Department of Defense has responded with the establishment of the United States Northern Command (NORTHCOM), the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, the Department of Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Council. These organizations will focus elements of national power in prosecution of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).²³

USSOCOM strategic focus has changed in several ways. Attention has shifted from regional to global. Prior to 11 September 2001, the geographic combatant commanders were normally supported by non-geographic combatant commands such as USSOCOM in execution of theater operations and plans. For the Global War on Terrorism, USSOCOM has been designated the supported command. Changes in policy include preemptive measures moving from reactive to proactive while still supporting the combatant commanders' theater specific plans.

Special Operations Forces number one priority is the Global War on Terrorism. Supporting United States strategies are the National Security Strategy, National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, National Strategy for Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the National Drug Control Strategy.

Special Operations Forces and other parts of the United States military will increasingly find itself working in areas that it has traditionally not been involved. The Counter Narcotics (CN) global picture has shown a nexus between terrorism and narcotics which will make this a military issue. For example, sixty percent of Afghanistan's GNP is from opium.

The Special Operations community is the future of the GWOT fight. Interagency cooperation between Joint Special Operations Forces and other governmental and non-governmental agencies have proven the ability to focus all elements of national power. The future will require even more innovative strategies. In a recent presentation by Francis Fargo Townsend, Deputy Assistant to the President, National Security Advisor for Combating

Terrorism, she stressed the need for SOF to be prepared; "Iraq and Afghanistan is not the only place we will have to go . . . We cannot be tentative on taking on enemy where we find them."²⁴

It is apparent that the old ways of doing business will not work in the future. No opposing force will challenge the United States in a conventional manner. They will design the kind of war that will attack our weaknesses with their strengths. Our ability to forge tight regional bonds and friendships along with special operations forces that are integrated into the culture and language of our advisories will be key to future successes.

Lieutenant General Schwartz, USAF, JCS J3, has correctly assessed the need for special operations forces to morph into the type of force that will more effectively get into the mindset of the enemy. We will need to look more like them in appearance and skill sets and be able to adapt to take down individuals rather than armies. He recently said "If 5-10 years from now SOF looks like us we will fail . . . white guys won't work."²⁵

As the roles and missions evolve there is a certain amount of risk involved as military special operations forces work more in covert action. Legal provisions that protect soldiers engaged in conventional combat will not necessarily apply to those soldiers conducting covert operations. This has been recognized and accepted by our leadership as reasonable risk for the potential gain that result from those type of operations.

Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan saw special operations forces operate at the "point of the spear" as they were employed on the ground within two weeks of 11 September 2001. The valuable lessons learned, techniques, tactics, and procedures developed working with the Central Intelligence Agency, and other interagency partners have already been applied to other conflicts.

Relationships developed with local military forces enabled small teams to multiply combat power. The success of empowering Captains with mission type orders was proven as they operated in autonomous environments with little oversight and support. Their creative application of warfare was largely thought to be responsible for the success of the war.

In Operation Iraqi Freedom special operations forces operated more in conjunction with conventional forces. Depending on the operational area, SOF was supporting or supported for different phases of the operation. Building on the experience obtained in OEF, SOF forces developed and executed operational plans that capitalized on previous lessons learned. SOF contributed greatly in the overall supporting role as small teams of operators kept the northern front in check.

A consistent theme throughout SOF commanders' after action comments expressed the value of interpersonal relationships that contributed to the successful prosecution of both the

wars. As an extension of the Combatant Commanders' and Department of State's Theater Security Cooperation Plans, SOF should continue to engage and develop cultural and language capabilities throughout the world. This will provide a low cost forward deployed global scout presence in addition to responsive limited combat power.

The continued fight in the Global War On Terrorism and other requirements will require SOF to continue to improve force structure and capabilities to meet the threat. SOF units should be able to operate independently with organic assets in support of the Combatant Commanders. Focus should continue on integration of the interagency along with improvement in intelligence capabilities. Congress and the Department of Defense have demonstrated support for USSOCOM by doubling the MFP-11 budget since 11 September 2001. Budget increases over the FY03 level are expected to increase 20% a year for the next five years.

The synthesis of Special Operations Forces operational priorities and unique capabilities support the broad strategic guidance within United States policy objectives when analyzed in the framework of ends, ways, and means. USSOCOM is uniquely organized and resourced to support national objectives while transforming to meet the future threat. Although not suited for every type of current and future threat, Special Operations Forces should be charged with anticipating and countering asymmetric threats to the United States. SOF should continue to study adversaries and apply force structure, strategic, operational, and tactical capabilities that apply all elements of national power to reach our national objectives.

And let there be no doubt, in the years ahead it is likely that we will be surprised again by new adversaries who may also strike in unexpected ways. And as they gain access to weapons of increasing power--and let there be no doubt but that they are--these attacks will grow vastly more deadly than those we suffered several months ago. Our challenge in this new century is a difficult one. It's really to prepare to defend our nation against the unknown, the uncertain and what we have to understand will be the unexpected. That may seem on the face of it an impossible task, but it is not.²⁶

—SecDef Rumsfeld

WORD COUNT=5110

ENDNOTES

¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* Joint Pub 3-05. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 17 April 1998), vii.

² George W. Bush. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 17 September 2002), 30.

³ Department of National Security and Strategy, *Directive Core Curriculum Course 2: "War, National Policy & Strategy"* (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, AY 2004), 143.

⁴ Special Operations Command *Special Operations In Peace and War*. USSOCOM PUB 1 (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: 25 January 1996), 2-16.

⁵ Ibid., 2-19.

⁶ Special Operations Command *United States Special Operations Forces: Posture Statement*, by Marshall Billingslea and Charles R. Holland (Washington, D.C.: 2003-2004), 8.

⁷ Ibid., 8-9.

⁸ Ronald H. Cole, *OPERATION URGENT FURY The Planning and Execution of Joint Operations in Grenada 12 October - 2 November 1983* Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Washington, DC 1997), 1.

⁹ USSOCOM PUB 1, 2-19

¹⁰ Donald Rumsfeld Press Briefing: Pentagon, 7 January 2003.

¹¹ U.S. Special Operations Command. *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual* (January 2004), 3-3.

¹² Joint Chiefs of Staff *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* Joint Pub 3-05. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 17 April 1998), III-1.

¹³ Posture Statement, 42.

¹⁴ Ibid., 45

¹⁵ Ibid., 48.

¹⁶ Ibid., 52.

¹⁷ Ibid., 56.

¹⁸ SOF Reference Manual, 2-1.

¹⁹ Posture Statement, 4.

²⁰ Ibid., 4

²¹ Stephen Biddle "Afghanistan and The Future of Warfare" *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2003), 46.

²² John Jogerst "What's so special about special operations?: Lessons from the war in Afghanistan" *Air & Space Power Journal* (Summer 2002), 98.

²³ Thomas O'Connell, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, Keynote Address: "The Department of Defense Role in Shaping Special Operations" Washington D.C., 5 February 2004.

²⁴ Ms. Francis Fargo Townsend, Deputy Assistant to the President, National Security Advisor for Combating Terrorism, Presentation "Understanding the Strategy for the War on Terrorism" Washington, D.C., 5 February 2004.

²⁵ Lieutenant General Norton A. Schwartz, USAF, Director for Operations, J3, The Joint Staff, Presentation: "Special Operations and the Emerging National Military Strategy" Washington D.C., 5 February 2004.

²⁶ Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, Remarks as Delivered at the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., Thursday, 31 January 2002.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Biddle, Stephen. "Afghanistan and The Future of Warfare," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2003): 31-46.
- Bush, George W. *A National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002.
- Cole, Ronald H. *OPERATION URGENT FURY The Planning and Execution of Joint Operations in Grenada 12 October - 2 November 1983* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint History Office, 1997.
- _____. *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*. Joint Pub 3-05. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 17 April 1998.
- Jogerst, John. "What's So Special About Special Operations?: Lessons from the War in Afghanistan," *Air & Space Power Journal* (Summer 2002): 98-101
- _____. *Joint Vision 2020*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 2000.
- _____. *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, Washington, D.C.: The White House, 14 February 2003.
- _____. *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, Washington, D.C.: The White House, July 2002.
- _____. *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, Washington, D.C.: The White House, 11 December 2002.
- Rumsfeld, Donald. Press Briefing. Pentagon, 7 January 2003.
- U.S. Army War College Department of National Security and Strategy, *Directive Core Curriculum Course 2: "War, National Policy & Strategy."* Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 2004.
- U.S. Department of the Army. Training and Doctrine Command. *Future Force Concepts For Army Special Operations Forces*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-5.20. Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Department of the Army, 14 January 2004.
- U.S. Department of Defense. *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*. Washington, D.C.: 30 September 2001.
- U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Doctrine for Joint Operations*. Joint Pub 3-0. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 10 September 2001.
- U.S. Special Operations Command. *Special Operations In Peace and War*. USSOCOM PUB 1. MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: 25 January 1996.
- U.S. Special Operations Command. *United States Special Operations Forces: Posture Statement*, by Marshall Billingslea and Charles R. Holland. Washington: 2003-2004.

